Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-10 (Canceled).

11. Currently amended) A hybrid riser configuration having a submerged tower ~~(4)~~ comprising a plurality of riser pipes ~~(10)~~ substantially inserted in guide conduits ~~(9)~~, and also having buoyancy means ~~(6) and tethering tension~~ acting as tower tensioning means, the riser pipes ~~(10)~~ and guide conduits ~~(9)~~ being connected to a base ~~(5)~~ anchored to the ocean floor, wherein a plurality of the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are acting as multiple tethers, each guide conduit ~~(9)~~ further acting as a radial constraint in elastic spiral deformation of the riser pipe ~~(10)~~ inside, wherein during tow-out and installation, the guide conduits provide necessary buoyancy to make the riser configuration, except the base and buoyancy means, nearly neutrally buoyant.

12. (Currently amended) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 11, wherein the riser pipes ~~(10)~~ and guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are rigidly connected both to the base ~~(5)~~ and the buoyancy means ~~(6)~~ of the riser configuration.

13. (Currently amended) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 11, wherein the material of the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ comprises aluminium or a similar light metal.

14. (Previously presented) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 11, wherein the riser configuration is protected by sacrificial anodes.

Claim 15 (Canceled).

16. (Currently amended) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 12, wherein the material of the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ comprises aluminium or a similar light metal.

17. (Previously presented) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 12, wherein the riser configuration is protected by sacrificial anodes.

18. Currently amended) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 12, wherein during tow-out and installation, the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ provide necessary buoyancy to make the riser configuration, except the base ~~(5)~~ and buoyancy means (6), near neutrally buoyant.

19. (Previously presented) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 13, wherein the riser configuration is protected by sacrificial anodes.

20. (Currently amended) A hybrid riser configuration according to claim 13, wherein during tow-out and installation, the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ provide necessary buoyancy to make the riser configuration, except the base ~~(5)~~ and buoyancy means ~~(6)~~, near neutrally buoyant.

21. (Currently amended) A method for installing a riser configuration having a submerged tower ~~(4)~~ comprising a plurality of riser pipes ~~(10)~~ substantially inserted in guide conduits ~~(9)~~ and also having a buoyancy tank ~~(6)~~ and gravity base ~~(5)~~ connected by said riser pipes ~~(10)~~ and guide conduits ~~(9)~~, comprising the steps of:

- fabricating a bundle ~~(4)~~ of guide conduits ~~(9)~~ and riser pipes ~~(10)~~ on a roller bed or rail bed from which it can be launched,

- connecting the buoyancy tank ~~(6)~~ and gravity base ~~(5)~~ to opposite ends of said bundle,

- sealing at least a plurality of the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ and riser pipes ~~(10)~~ of the bundle ~~(4)~~,

- launching the resultant structure and connecting the buoyancy tank and gravity base ends of the structure to respective towing vessels ~~(17)~~ via towing wires ~~(18)~~,

- flooding the buoyancy tank ~~(6)~~ to provide it with substantial negative buoyancy so that both the tank ~~(6)~~ and the base ~~(5)~~ will act as clump weights,

- towing the structure ~~(4,5,6)~~ to the offshore location for its installation as a sub-surface tow while maintaining sufficient angle and tension in the towing wires ~~(18)~~ to maintain substantial tension in the pipe bundle ~~(4)~~,

- lowering the base ~~(5)~~ end of the structure ~~(4-6)~~ by paying out the towing wire connected to the base ~~(5)~~,

- permitting water to enter the spaces formed between the riser pipes ~~(10)~~ and their respective guide conduit ~~(9)~~ when the base ~~(5)~~ has reached a predetermined depth in order to limit the differential pressure across the wall of the guide conduits ~~(9)~~,

- continuing **to** ~~lowering~~ **lower** the base end of the structure until the structure is perpendicular and suspended from the towing wire ~~(18)~~ connected to the buoyancy tank ~~(6)~~, and

- lowering the structure to allow the base ~~(5)~~ to penetrate the bottom ~~(2)~~ mud-line and anchoring the base to the ocean floor, and removing the water ballast and towing wire ~~(18)~~ from the buoyancy tank, thus providing tension in the guide conduits ~~(9)~~.

22. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 21, wherein a motion compensating system is employed in the towing wire ~~(18)~~ between the buoyancy tank ~~(6)~~ and surface vessel. ~~(17)~~.

23. Currently amended) A method according to clam 21, wherein the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are fabricated by welding together sections of aluminium pipe using friction stir welding.

24. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 21, wherein said guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are made by joining sections of aluminium pipe which are made with a longitudinal seam welded by means of friction stir welding.

25. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 21, wherein at least some of the annular spaces between the riser pipers ~~(10)~~ and the corresponding guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are filled with a gel after expelling any water having entered said spaces during installation of the structure.

26. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 22, wherein the guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are fabricated by welding together sections of aluminium pipe using friction stir welding.

27. Currently amended) A method according to claim 22, wherein said guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are made by joining sections of aluminium pipe which are made with a longitudinal seam welded by means of friction stir welding.

28. Currently amended) A method according to claim 22, wherein at least some of the annular spaces between the riser pipes ~~(10)~~ and the corresponding guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are filled with a gel after expelling any water having entered said spaces during installation of the structure.

29. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 23, wherein said guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are made by joining sections of aluminium pipe which are made with a longitudinal seam welded by means of friction stir welding.

30. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 23, wherein at least some of the annular spaces between the riser pipes ~~(10)~~ and the corresponding guide conduits ~~(9)~~ are filled with a gel after expelling any water having entered said spaces during installation of the structure.